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Added To Their Number

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Acts 2:40,41

And with many other words he solemnly testified and kept on exhorting them, saying, "Be saved from this perverse generation. So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls.

When, exactly are we added to their number? Who, exactly, are they? Who, exactly, does the adding? There are many different answers to these questions in our religious world, but one truth found in the acts account.

What group of people, who believe in our Lord Jesus, does not consider their number the center of this picture? Answer: The ones to which subsequent converts are added. The account in acts had a central core, a group that had started with John the Baptist calling the honest out of Israel for the coming kingdom, baptizing them for the remission of sins and obviously the rebirth the Lord Jesus said was absolutely a must in John 3:3-5.

Let's pick up with the account in Acts 1 where the apostles had gone back to Jerusalem to wait for the coming of the power and they were all gathered together in Acts 1:14-15 - *These all with one mind were continually devoting themselves to prayer, along with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers. At this time, Peter stood up in the midst of the brethren (a gathering of about one hundred and twenty persons was there together,)* Here is who we are added to when our new spiritual life is given to us, when we are born into this chosen race as Peter describes us in 1 Peter 2:9 - *But you are a CHOSEN RACE, A royal priesthood, A holy NATION, a PEOPLE FOR God's OWN POSSESSION, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;*

This seems to me to be much the same as a human child, born into the human race. The child is born and is added to the human race. There is no approval needed by anyone. It does not matter what anyone thinks. This little person becomes one of us. If one is conceived and matures to full term and is born, they are human. We may not be wanted by those who gave us birth, but we are. So, when can we say we are as a Christian? When are we added to that chosen race?

I was born to the human race in a little house on Prospect Avenue in Clearwater, Florida, while six years later my brother was born in the more acceptable manner, at least by today's standards, in a hospital in the same town. Does anyone reason that because my brother and I were not born in the same place, we are not brothers? Could my brother's birth have taken place in a house across the street? Does the location of either of our births have any bearing on our humanity? I can't imagine it would make a difference if I was born in the middle of the jungle surrounded by gorillas and my mother died giving birth to me. No one in their right mind would consider me a gorilla. I don't decide those things. Neither does any other human being. In the case of our physical birth, God's predetermined biological plan determines, while on the spiritual side it is God's predetermined plan. Does it matter where my conception took place? Does it matter where my maturation to full term took place? Does it matter where I was born? Oh, we have already covered that, and the answer is NO.

Now let's look at what is necessary to be born into GOD's chosen race. What might be considered conception in a spiritual birth process would be receiving the word. Acts 2:41 *So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls.* The Lord Jesus used the analogy of seed and soil in the parable of the sower, planting seed and it

germinating. Mark 4:14 The sower sows the word. Just like the soil receives the seed, so our hearts receive the word and the birth sequence has begun. It really doesn't matter if I am sitting in a Buddhist temple when I am presented with the word. If it is planted it can, with the right soil, grow. 1 Corinthians 3:6-8 I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth. So then neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but God who causes the growth. It is somewhat important to me to recognize that even if an atheist were to read or say something from God's word and it is received in an honest heart it will result in the birth of one of the chosen race.

The problem with where someone is born is the care they receive as newborns. I am ashamed to say that all too often a newborn is left to fend for themselves and thus are no better off than when born in a hostile environment. Instead of rejecting those who have been born of unusual circumstances how about we instead, seek out those orphaned newborns — receive them gladly into the chosen race. If something was missing in their teaching, it will become evident soon enough.

One thing seems certain. This adding daily process will continue until the LORD comes back. *Acts 2:47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved. 2 Peter 3:9 The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.*